March 19, 1962

Dr. J.J. Trentin
Department of Anatomy
Baylor University
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Houston 25, Texas

Dear Dr. Trentin:

I am very sorry not to have been able to hear your paper on The Production of Antibodies in Clones Transplanted Cells", but some word of your recent results did, of course, reach here via the account in the New York Times. I am leaving soon for a six weeks lecture tour in Japan, and will have one or two occasions to talk about the cellular and genetic basis of antibody formation. For this reason, I would be particularly grateful to you if you could let me have a copy of the paper that you presented at Houston so that I can take fåår account of it. If you are limited in the number of copies at your disposal, I will be very happy to send it back to you quite promptly.

If I can interpret from the very general account in the New York Times, I would judge that you have done an experiment that shows the pluripotency of established clones after transplantation. If these cells are similar to those of the normal adult, the result would, of course, disqualify Burnet's original version of the clonal selection theory which supposed spontaneous mutability to be permissable only during fetal life. However, if the mutability proceeds throughout the life, one would have to regard the lymphoid population of any adult individual as constituting a comparable clone, derived from the zygote. It will be a nice matter of judgment to decide how to do a critical experiment to test clonal selection in the face of persistent adult hypermutability of the lymphoid cells. There is no particular reason to expect the writer for the New York Times to take account of such subtilities, but, of course, I had to anticipate them in my own write up of the clonal selection theory, and I would be very curious to apply my own judgment on the details of your findings. In any event, I am really very pleased that the experiment has been done so that whatever fact can be inferred from it may be used as a foundation stone of further analysis.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics